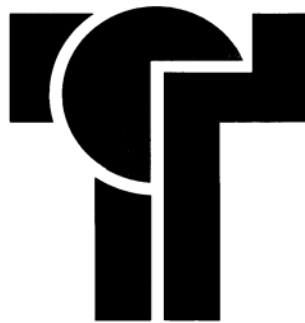


City of Tempe

**Mayor's Youth Advisory
Commission**

Youth Town Hall Report

2006



Dear Mayor and City Council:

This has been another exciting year for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission (MYAC). Activities organized by MYAC have allowed Tempe's youth to contribute their ideas and assist in the continued development of our city. We would like to thank you for your on-going support of our Commission and its projects.

The events sponsored by MYAC this year were very successful. Student Government Day emphasized the importance and effectiveness of community involvement. High school students were given the opportunity to experience first hand the inner workings of government by shadowing city officials and by participating in a mock City Council meeting.

Our annual Town Hall allowed youth and community leaders to exchange ideas on issues concerning youth. A summary of the dialogue that occurred and the recommendations made are detailed in this report. These recommendations are the original ideas of Tempe's youth to solve problems facing our community.

On behalf of the Commission I would like to thank you again for your dedication and commitment to the youth of Tempe. The successes we have had could not have been achieved without your support.

Sincerely,

**Marquette Bycura, Youth Town Hall Chairperson
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

**Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
2005/2006 Officers**

Taylor Walton
Chairperson

Charlesa Stoglin
Vice Chairperson

Vanessa Trinidad
Administrative Recorder

Dominique Dennis
Treasurer

Katelyn Murphy
Student Government Day Chairperson

Marquette Bycura
Youth Town Hall Chairperson

Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission 2005/2006 Members

**Arianna Acosta
Alex Austin
Jesse Bradbury
Ramonía Dixon
David Coon
Andrea Eller
Carmen Gammage
Rebecca Gammage
Allie Gorton
Tiffany Kintigh
Ben LoBrutto
Jordan Messacar
Desiree Olague
Corie Owens
Kimberly Trudgen**

Tempe City Council

**Mayor
Hugh Hallman**

**Vice Mayor
Hut Hutson**

**Council Members
Ben Arredondo**

Barbara Carter

Shana Ellis

Mark Mitchell

Onnie Shekerjian

Tempe Youth Town Hall

Chairperson's Report

Presented by

Marquette Bycura

Youth Town Hall Chairperson

March 22, 2006

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission sponsors Tempe's Youth Town Hall each year in order to bring together youth and adults from the community to discuss issues of concern to Tempe's youth and offer recommendations for practical solutions.

This was Tempe's twenty-sixth year to sponsor Youth Town Hall, which was held Wednesday, March 22, 2006 at the Westside Community Center. To ensure input from all sectors of our community representatives from high schools, middle schools, service clubs, youth organizations, community centers, local businesses, the police department, and juvenile court were invited to participate.

Participants were divided into six discussion groups covering three topic areas. Two groups discussed **Preventing Reckless Driving** and two other groups discussed **Addressing Academic Pressures**. The remaining two groups addressed **Preventing Underage Smoking**.

After a welcome by Mayor Hugh Hallman, and a keynote address by Donald E. Smith, the 2002-03 National Youth of the Year, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, participants met in their groups. They began discussion of their assigned topics by defining the problem and possible contributing factors. Groups then made recommendations for solutions and focused on those that were practical and could be easily implemented. Youth spokespersons from each of the discussion groups presented their committee's recommendations to all Town Hall participants in the closing general session. These presentations gave those in attendance the opportunity to gain understanding and insight from one another.

The Youth Town Hall Report is available to various agencies, organizations, schools and service clubs for review and as a planning tool in our community. Youth Town Hall provides both youth and adults the opportunity to communicate openly with one another about important issues that affect them. It is hoped that Youth Town Hall will continue to be the model and success it has been in the past.

CITY OF TEMPE YOUTH TOWN HALL AGENDA

Wednesday, March 22, 2006
Westside Community Center
715 West Fifth Street

- 8:15 - 8:45** **Registration** Front of Westside Community Center
Continental Breakfast served
- 8:45 - 9:20** **Opening Session** Westside Community Center Gymnasium
- Introduction -Taylor Walton, MYAC Chairperson
- Welcome - Mayor Hugh Hallman, City of Tempe
- Keynote Address - Donald E. Smith, 2002-03 National Youth of the Year,
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- Instructions - Marquette Bycura, Youth Town Hall Chairperson
- 9:30 - 12:00** **Committee Sessions** - Breaks will occur at the discretion of each committee.
Refreshments will be available in the meeting rooms.
- Committee A** - "Preventing Reckless Driving - 1"
Westside Community Center – Los Vecinos
- Committee B** - "Preventing Reckless Driving - 2"
Westside Community Center – Computer Lab
- Committee C** - "Addressing Academic Pressures - 1"
Westside Community Center – Sunset Room
- Committee D** - "Addressing Academic Pressures - 2"
Westside Community Center – Riverside Room
- Committee E** - "Preventing Underage Smoking -1"
Westside Community Center – Lindon Park Room
- Committee F** - "Preventing Underage Smoking - 2"
Westside Community Center – Art Room
- 12:00 - 1:00** **Lunch** – Provided to all participants at the Westside Community Center
Catered by Dilly's Deli
- 1:00 – 1:55** **Committee Sessions Resume - Discussion Wrap-Up**
- 2:00 - 2:30** **Closing Session** – Westside Community Center Gymnasium
- Committee Summaries
- Each committee representative will give a 3 to 5 minute summary.
 - Closing Remarks – Marquette Bycura, Town Hall Chairperson

Preventing Reckless Driving-1

Discussion Summary:

Our group began their discussion by focusing on the causes of reckless driving. Factors identified as contributing to reckless driving included the driver's emotional detachment from other drivers as fellow humans, road rage, being in a hurry, thrill seeking, substance abuse, media/movie/video-game influences, teenagers' sense of being indestructible and environmental factors such as wide, open streets and freeway lanes. Our group identified the top reckless driving issues for teens are a lack of behind-the-wheel driving experience, the lack of affordable behind-the-wheel driving classes, immaturity, distractions such as loud music, peers in the car, cell phones, and external conditions that enhance the ability to easily speed.

Recommendations:

1. Increase environmental barriers that reduce reckless driving.

The City could expand environmental barriers that physically enforce special *slow zones* in neighborhoods where speeding is a problem. Other environmental deterrents that could be established in areas where speeding is common include speed cameras, a progression of reminder signs to "slow down", and signs depicting children about to step out in the street.

2. Develop a Drive Safely awareness campaign.

'Drive Safe' signs and messages could be placed on city buses, the Flash and on other areas easily viewed to remind drivers to be more cautious and pay closer attention to individual driving habits. The City could work with local businesses and insurance companies, and possibly civic organizations, to develop and implement the awareness campaign.

3. Provide parents with teen driver's information.

The City of Tempe, the high schools and the private sector could partner to provide information to parents on how to encourage their teens to become safe drivers. Channel 11, Channel 8, the East Valley Tribune and other media outlets could disseminate this information and also provide community service announcements that encourage parents to talk to their children early about being a responsible driver and also encourage parents to be a good example of safe driving.

4. Establish accessible affordable driver's education programs for teens.

The City could work with the private sector and the schools to provide affordable driver's education programs for teens that improve teen drivers' skills and experience. The driver's education programs would include monitored behind-the-wheel experience and virtual and computer generated trainings.

Preventing Reckless Driving - 1

**Facilitators: Tricia Gilman
Jordan Messacar**

**City of Tempe - Community Services
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Elyse Braun
Heather DeVoe
Danielle Donofrio
Quentin Griffin
Ben Johnson
Anjali Muralidhar
Sammi Munzer
Shawnice Strawn
Michael Zanzi

Kyrene Middle School
Chandler's Mayor's Youth Commission
Corona del Sol High School
Gililand Middle School
Marcos de Niza High School
Corona del Sol High School
Fees Middle School
Gililand Middle School
Boys & Girls Clubs-Tempe/Ladmo Branch

Adult Participants

Tamara Brooks-Primera
Mary Ann Dillon
Huma Haroon

Jeffrey Millen
Rosie Perez

City of Tempe - City Attorney's Office
KAET Channel Eight, Arizona PBS
Governor's Office for Children, Youth &
Families
Tempe Police Department - Crime Prevention
Chicanos Por La Causa

Preventing Reckless Driving - 2

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion group began by identifying what is reckless driving. Speeding, tailgating, unsafe lane changes, not paying attention to the road, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, aggression, and ignoring traffic laws were all identified as reckless driving. Participants then focused on identifying some of the causes of reckless driving in teens. These include a lack of behind the wheel experience, a variety of distractions ranging from friends in the car, eating, music, cell phone use, rushing, and simple inattention. Our group agreed that many teens possess an omnipotent attitude which increases the likelihood of risk taking behavior. Last, our group also discussed the consequences of reckless driving and the impact it has on the individual well as the community.

Recommendations:

1. Install left hand turn lanes and left hand turn lights at intersections' near high schools.

Often teens get confused as to when to turn left when there is not a left hand turn light and they have poor judgment as to when it is safe to turn. The City could install additional left hand turn lanes and left hand turn lights near high school intersections.

2. Increase police presence near high schools during heavy traffic hours.

Additional police presence near high schools during heavy traffic hours would be a reminder to all drivers to follow the laws and drive safely.

3. Provide a class for parents of teenagers on how to teach them to drive.

The first steps in teaching driving are often nerve wracking and emotionally charged. The City of Tempe could develop and offer a class designed for parents of teenagers, entitled, *Teach Your Teen to Drive*. The class could be offered several times a year and designed to assist parents in their efforts to teach their teenager to drive. This class would help parents keep their cool and be effective in promoting safe and defensive driving habits.

4. Establish an accessible, affordable defensive driving program for teens.

The City of Tempe could work with the private sector in Tempe to establish a defensive driving class for teens that includes behind-the-wheel experience. It could be presented four times per year for a small fee. Upon completion of the course a certificate would be awarded and may be

given to the individual's insurance company, for a possible reduction of their car insurance rates. Providing this education would enhance the safety of our entire community.

Preventing Reckless Driving – 2

**Facilitators: Mickie Berry
Tiffany Kintigh**

**City of Tempe – Community Services
Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Darlene Edwards
John Fortune
Joseph Fraley
Danica Ganje
Kelsey Haeuser
Daniel Hardy
Adela Martinez
Jesus Rivas
Michael Rivera
Melissa Wrapp

Tempe High School
Corona del Sol High School
Fees Middle School
Kyrene Middle School
Connolly Middle School
Chandler's Mayor's Youth Commission
Escalante Community Center
McClintock High School
Tempe Accelerated High School
Corona del Sol High School

Adult Participants

Barbara Miller
Jaron Neal
Marlene Pontrelli
Leah Sergeant
Mark Stodola

County Attorney's Office
Boy's and Girls Clubs - Tempe/Ladmo Branch
City of Tempe - City Attorney's Office
City of Tempe - Kid Zone
Tempe Municipal Court

Addressing Academic Pressures – 1

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion group initially focused on determining the types of academic pressures teens currently face on a daily basis. Both the middle school and high school students shared the same concerns. One of the academic pressures that the teens identified was the pressure to score well on the SAT and AIMS tests. The group also agreed that they are under pressure, either overt or covert, by their parents. Most admitted that their parents have very high expectations that they find may be difficult for them to live up to. Youth participants shared that other family members, teachers, and even their peers also pressure them to be academically successful. The results of this pressure are that they sometimes feel like failures, they lack motivation, and they have no time for themselves. They also identified that the transition from middle school to high school is extremely difficult and they feel unprepared for the next level of learning.

Recommendations:

1. Establish peer mentoring programs.

To assist students in the transition from middle to high school programs where high school students mentor incoming freshmen could be developed or expanded. High school students could also present in 8th grade classes on what to expect in high school.

2. Encourage stronger communication between school counselors and students.

School counselors could visit high school classes regularly to encourage students to think about their future and to seek them out for information on college preparation, scholarship information, and vocational training.

3. Offer “career days” to all high school students.

High schools could work with the City and local agencies and businesses to provide career days for all high schools students. Information on a variety of careers would be provided. This would encourage all grade levels of students and many types of students to think about their future and what they need to accomplish.

4. Provide information to parents on how to encourage rather than pressure their child academically.

Information could be developed by the schools and counselors that provide parents with tips on how to encourage their child academically and on the warning signs of stress. This information could be disseminated to parents through the school newsletter, or in a brochure provided at school orientations and open houses, and could also be made available at a number of school and community settings.

5. Establish interdepartmental communication between teaching staff.

Schools could establish interdepartmental work groups to review expected lesson plans in an effort to establish a more balanced workload for students. This would alleviate some of the overlapping assignments and tests that students face.

Addressing Academic Pressures - 1

**Facilitators: Kris Scharlau
Vanessa Trinidad**

**City of Tempe - Community Services
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Caterina Andorfer
KaLynda Barton
Danielle Brown
Christie DeVoe
Trisha Gonzalez
Jenna Grover
Ashley Laidlaw
Renee Melara
Joseph Rodriguez

Marcos de Niza High School
McKemy Middle School
Escalante Community Center
Chandler's Mayor's Youth Commission
Marcos de Niza High School
Corona del Sol High School
Kyrene Middle School
Connolly Middle School
McClintock High School

Adult Participants

Maja Aurora
Abraham Gonzalez
Emily Harris
Zita Johnson
Kathleen McLemore

City of Tempe - Escalante Community Center
Chicanos Por La Causa
Tempe Elementary School District #3
TUHSD Governing Board
Kyrene Middle School

Addressing Academic Pressures-2

Discussion Summary:

Participants in our discussion group began by identifying what kinds of academic pressures teens face and from whom. Our discussion then focused primarily on State regulated requirements such as the AIMS test. Participants felt the requirements place tremendous pressures on teachers and students. As a consequence some teachers are not motivated or excited to actually teach and some students are not motivated or excited to learn. Participants also identified school culture as a factor of pressure for some students. Last, the diverse family backgrounds that the students bring to their different campuses can lead to academic pressures.

Recommendations:

- 1. Provide summer programs for the transition from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school.**

Summer programs focusing on the transitions from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school would help students throughout their educational career in being more successful and comfortable. These programs would be a collaborative effort between the two elementary schools and one high school district located in Tempe.

- 2. Provide a variety of alternate awards for good performance as a school community.**

Schools could to identify key points in the school year when students have the most academic pressure such as during midterms, AIMS and final exams and reward students through campus wide ice cream socials, mini concerts, and fun assemblies for their good performance. This would increase students' sense of belonging to a caring school community. The school administrations could create a committee to plan such events.

- 3. Provide students with meaningful internships within the school and/or community.**

Students are not exposed to as much experiential opportunities in fields they are interested in. A collaborative effort between the schools, the City and community organizations would expose students to the gamut of careers as well as allowing the students to develop skills for the career choice they make.

4. Establish a Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA).

This can serve as an outlet for students, teacher and parents to communicate and address the community needs of the school. In order to make it attractive to all parties, the school would collaborate with the PTSA in hosting the meetings at different locations in the community each month and providing small social gathering before the meetings.

5. Provide preparation programs for upcoming tests.

School administration and faculty could collaborate to provide resources for the students prior to taking exams such as AIMS. These resources can include lunch tutoring sessions; break tutoring sessions and reviews of the testing materials.

6. Provide online programs to review academic progress for students, teachers, and parents.

Students, parents and teachers could track the academic progress and records of the students. This would create awareness of the progress through grade postings, test dates and test scores being available at this site.

Addressing Academic Pressures - 2

**Facilitators: Ivania Hernandez
Charlesa Stoglin**

**Peer Solutions, Inc.
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Quincy Hall
Juilian Hardy
Roseanne Johnson
Leslie Klein
Michelle Lewis
Lorenzo Nicholls
Lindsey Obr
Sierra Palmer
Emile Saad
Monica Zamora

Corona del Sol High School
Chandler's Mayor's Youth Commission
Gililland Middle School
McKemy Middle School
Marcos de Niza High School
Escalante Community Center
Connolly Middle School
Kyrene Middle School
McClintock High School
Tempe Accelerated High School

Adult Participants

Robert Coccagna
LaKeisha Cook
Sarah de Baca
Nanette Lubin

Arizona Department of Education
Kyrene School District
City of Chandler - Recreation Division
Valley of the Sun United Way

Preventing Underage Smoking – 1

Discussion Summary:

Participants in our discussion group began by discussing the issues and problems related to and surrounding underage tobacco use in all forms with the top three being cigarettes, hookah and chewing tobacco. The group then identified factors that need to be addressed in order to prevent youth from using tobacco. These factors include youths denial of the long term effects of tobacco use, the need for preventative education in schools, the lack of consequences for smoking and the need for positive activities directly after-school.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a tobacco abuse awareness campaign.

Our group determined that teenagers are not concerned about the long term health risks that come with using all types of tobacco. An awareness campaign could include posters placed in teen hangouts and ads in the Tempe News and school newspapers detailing the dangers and consequences of using tobacco. This campaign would be directly targeted at teenagers but could also help educate all of Tempe.

2. Develop and enforce legal consequences for underage tobacco use.

The City of Tempe could implement a three strike system of consequences for underage tobacco use. First offense would be community service or a class on the tobacco use and its risks. Second offense would be a fine. The third offense would be a loss of driver's license or a delay in obtaining their license.

3. Inform authorities of smoking hotspots.

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission and other youth groups could have a round table discussion with the Tempe Police to inform them of smoking hotspots as most underage smoking occurs outside of school but not at home. The students at each school know where students are smoking. The Tempe Police can patrol those areas more often. This would deter underage smoking by schools and parks making it inconvenient and less desirable.

4. Develop an underage smoking prevention video.

A high school drama club or other high school group could create a new updated underage smoking deterrent video to show in elementary and/or middle schools as a new educational and awareness tool. By starting the education and awareness at a young age the youth will be prepared to deal with peer pressure and not feel the need to start using tobacco.

5. Establish an after school bus system and club program.

Schools could provide students with buses from their schools to recreational centers and/or Boys and Girls Clubs near their home so students can stay there until their parent or guardian can pick them up. Giving students a positive outlet and alternatives after school gets out will assist in preventing underage smoking.

Preventing Underage Smoking - 1

**Facilitators: Shauna Robinette
Taylor Walton**

**Peer Solutions, Inc.
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Vanessa Cruz
Jonathan Hu
Ali Lutz
Nichole Petteruti
Shalin Sheth
Scott Tippet
Olamide Ugunde

Gililand Middle School
Corona del Sol High School
Fees Middle School
Kyrene Middle School
Chandler's Mayor's Youth Commission
McClintock High School
Escalante Community Center

Adult Participants

Eve Aguirre
Linda Cano
Jennifer Drury

Valorie Smith
Christina Tremaine

Chicanos Por La Causa
City of Tempe - Adapted Recreation
Town of Guadalupe - Youth & Young Adult
Programs
City of Tempe - Parks & Recreation Department
Tempe Elementary School District #3

Preventing Underage Smoking – 2

Discussion Summary:

Our discussion group began by focusing on the use of tobacco by minors, including the use of flavored cigarettes and the prevalence of hookah bars in our community. The teens in our group disclosed that many students smoke just off campus after and during school. They also stated that hookah bars have become very trendy among teens and while there is a policy of not allowing anyone under 18 to use hookah that few of the hookah bars check identification. Flavored cigarettes or bidis have become very popular among teens in the past few years and teens perceived them as less harmful than regular tobacco. The group felt there is a lack of awareness by parents and adults in general about underage smoking and hookah bars. Last, the group identified marijuana use as a serious underage smoking problem among teens. They felt there is a lack of education on school campuses about marijuana use and the personal consequences of use.

Recommendations:

1. Develop an awareness campaign for parents, teachers and adult community members about tobacco use among teens.

A public awareness campaign could be developed by local public health agencies, prevention programs and the schools that enhances parents and other adults knowledge of underage tobacco use. The campaign would include developing and sending newsletters to parents on tobacco and hookah use, providing brochures about youths' tobacco use in school office kiosks, school parent events, in community centers, the library and other public settings that parents frequent.

2. Implement “sting” operations to enforce underage tobacco laws.

The police department could work with East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) law enforcement students, police explorers, and other youth groups to enforce underage tobacco use laws. Youth under the age of 18 under the supervision of the police department could attempt to use tobacco in hookah bars, or purchase tobacco in convenience stores and other establishments which have been identified as possibly being in violation of underage smoking laws. Establishments in violation of the law could be warned for a first violation and fined for second or additional violations.

3. Provide information to students about the dangers of tobacco and marijuana use.

The schools in partnership with local public health agencies and prevention programs could provide information about the dangers of tobacco and marijuana on the schools' closed circuit televisions, through school newsletters, brochures, and school assemblies. Students could also develop public service announcements that could be used in the schools.

4. Implement drug testing at the schools to address marijuana use.

Schools could establish drug testing for any school activity where a student is expected to represent the school out in the community, including sports and fine arts programs. The cost for the drug testing could be offset by increased activity fees. Students with positive results would be required to participate in substance abuse intervention services and would be suspended from the school activity until completion of the program.

Preventing Underage Smoking - 2

**Facilitators: Hilary Cummings
David Coon**

**EOTB Consulting
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission**

Youth Participants

Brandon Bohlman
Ariana Carbajal
Katie Cole
JoWellen Douthit
Hannah Drew
Tyonnie Fisher
Nikhil Kulkarni
William Mabry
Chaunci Toney

Marcos de Niza High School
Tempe High School
Tempe Boys & Girls Club
McClintock High School
Connolly Middle School
Gililand Middle School
Corona del Sol High School
Fees Middle School
Chandler's Mayor's Youth Commission

Adult Participants

Erin Hart

Patricia Hillman
Danielle Medrano
Sylvia Polanco
Lynette Stonefeld

Governor's Office for Children, Youth &
Families
Tempe Elementary School District #3
City of Tolleson
Community Bridges
Tempe/Kryene Communities in Schools

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission would like to extend a special thanks to the East Valley Boys and Girls Club - Tempe/Ladmo Branch. Their assistance in hosting this year's Youth Town Hall at the Westside Community Center contributed to the event's success.